



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

It is clear from this how highly he estimated these songs, a number of which HERDER inserted in his collection of 'Volkslieder.' But was it purely literary interest which caused him to speak in such terms of this collection? It consists of 12 poems written with a care that would almost allow us to suspect that a philologist had gathered them for purely scientific purposes. Several of them belong to the old treasure of songs of the German people, and, possessing those qualities described above by HERDER, their power of feeling and imagination caused them to survive for centuries. And it was this elementary power that seized the young poet; for just at the time when he collected them the truth contained in this simple poetry must have been overwhelming to him. It was at the time of his breaking with Friederike, when his conscience already tortured him (as he writes in a letter from Sesenheim), that he collected these songs, a number of which treat of the fate of betrayed and forsaken girls.

I have no doubt that this was the reason why he carried them on his heart like a precious burden. And in these songs which were so dear to him, in which he found realized the doctrines of his teacher and friend, he also found the course of those tragic events which he needed in order to develop the character and the fate of Gretchen, so far as she does not resemble Friederike.

The question might arise, however, whether GOETHE really considered such songs as poetic material of which to make use in his larger productions. One of the reviews in the *Frankfurter gel. Anzeiger* will give us an interesting answer to this question. Speaking of a worthless production of ZACHARIAE, one of his Leipsic friends, he says: "Allerdings wäre in den Mährlein und Liedern, die unter Handwerkspurschen, Soldaten und Mägden herumgehen, oft eine *neue Melodie*, ein neuer Romanzenton zu holen. Denn die Verfasser dieser Lieder und Mährlein schrieben doch wenigstens nicht fürs Publikum. . . Dem Verfasser fehlt der Bänkelsängersblick, der in der Welt nichts als Abentheuer, Strafgericht, Liebe, Mord und Todschlag sieht. . . Weder naive Freude noch naive Wehklage der Menschen aus Ritter- und Feenzeiten, deren Seele

eine Bildertafel ist, die mit ihrem Körper lieben, mit ihren Augen denken und mit ihren Fäusten zuschlagen. . ." A still stronger proof for the fact that he made use of such popular ballads, is furnished by the last act of his drama "Clavigo." In 'Wahrheit und Dichtung' he relates himself: "Um zuletzt abzuschliessen entlehnt' ich den Schluss einer englischen Ballade." It was, however, not an English ballad that he made use of, but the very poem, "Das Lied vom Herrn und der Magd," which, according to my opinion, had such a great influence upon the formation of the Gretchentragödie.¹

Summing up the results of this investigation, we obtain the following: The principal features of the character of Gretchen, as she appears in the first scenes, are those of Friederike of Sesenheim; the subsequent scenes, showing her tragic fate and end, are chiefly due to the influence of the old German ballads collected by GOETHE. This influence is made all the more probable by the revolution in GOETHE'S æsthetic views, which at the time of conceiving the idea of 'Faust' was caused in him through his acquaintance with HERDER. The Gretchentragödie, in its dramatic construction and linguistic peculiarities, reveals the revolution in GOETHE'S æsthetic views more clearly than any other of his larger productions.

JULIUS GOEBEL.

LAMARTINE.

Selected Poems from Premières et Nouvelles Méditations. Edited, with biographical sketch and notes, by GEORGE O. CURME, A. M., Boston; D. C. Heath & Co. 1888. 12mo, pp. xxxi, 179.

In preparing a foreign text for use in the recitation room it is generally the purpose of

1 It seems quite evident to me that the verses in this poem:

Wenn wir das Kindlein gebohren han,
So wollen wir's lernen schwimmen.

will easily be recognized in the "Kerkerscene" where Gretchen speaks of the drowning of her child; while the lines:

Er flog wohl über Stock und Stein,
Wie Vögel unterm Himmel,

naturally suggests the scene: 'Faust, Mephistopheles auf schwarzen Pferden daherbrausend.' It is therefore not necessary to believe with ERICH SCHMIDT that the latter scene was suggested to GOETHE by BÜRGER'S "Leonore." The character of Valentin, the brother who tries to avenge his sister's shame probably originated in GOETHE'S imagination through the poem, "Das Lied vom Pfalzgrafen" (*Nendrucke* xiv, 31).

the notes and comments to aid the student in understanding the grammatical forms and the syntactical constructions. PROF. CURME, in the above admirable selection from among the best poems of LAMARTINE, has seen fit to depart from the beaten track and to direct the attention of his students to the literary side of the French poet, to his spirit rather than to his manner of expression. Accordingly his introduction, and the greater part of the space usually allotted to notes, is taken up with the author's life, a discussion of his personality, and the history of the separate poems. As the editor himself says in the preface: "My object in the biographical sketch has been twofold: to point out to the student what poems among the voluminous works of the poet he should read, and then to lead him to points in these poems where he can find views of the poet's life as it flows in his beautiful verses." And again, referring to the criticism of the schools; "There are two kinds of criticism, appreciative and destructive. The former seeks to enhance the reader's enjoyment of the author and at the same time gently warns where it is necessary. . . . Destructive criticism is rarely of any value and is in most cases one of the most positive evils in literature."

In examining the work of the editor and his associates—for he has associates, in accordance with the rapidly growing tendency to coöperation and collaboration—we are gratified to see that the first part of his program has been successfully carried out. In the collection itself are included the finest pieces of LAMARTINE, while indications are not lacking in regard to the less valued poems and the longer works. No more favorable view could be given, with proofs in hand, of the author's character as a poet. But when the editor comes to view his subject from the standpoint of a critic, one is compelled, even allowing his own premises, to disagree with him. So far as I am aware, the "two kinds of criticism" mentioned above have no separate existence. Criticism is at the same time both "appreciative" and "destructive:" appreciative of the good in literature, destructive of the bad.

Deviation from this æsthetic standard is commonly called eulogy on the one hand, detraction on the other. Because the editor

considers his task to be that of a eulogist, I submit that it is hardly fair to assume that MR. SAINTSBURY and his kind—in regard to whom PROF. CURME sorrowfully exclaims: "Why did these men write at all? What have they accomplished?"—are willing to consider their function to be that of detractors.

The question then resolves itself into this: Has the editor made a success of his eulogy, taking for granted the audience he has had in view? The first part of the biographical sketch is well conceived. The allusions to the STE.-BEUVE-TAINE theory of authors are excellent; the early life of LAMARTINE and his favorite readings are clearly indicated. Attention to detail on the part of the editor is evident. Not having access to the documents mentioned by the editor (p. vi), I should be disposed to ask his authority for the date, 1813, of the poem *À Elvire*, and for the statement that Graziella was also called by the poet Elvire (pp. viii, xix). The editor neglects to state that the success of the 'Nouvelles Méditations' (p. xxi) was not so great as that of the 'Premières,' and that the religious element of the 'Harmonies' (p. xxii) is rather pantheistic than Christian. In the latter volume certain of the poems cited by the editor, as the *Bénédiction* [not *Bénédictions*] *de Dieu*, show already the negligence that was to ruin the subsequent career of the versifier—which indeed the editor seems to consider commendable (pp. xvii, xxix)—and the diffuseness of thought that proved so fatal in after years. In the remainder of the sketch confusion arises from the lack of chronological order; the 'Histoire des Girondins' is considered before 'Jocelyn,' and the remarks on 'La Chute d'un Ange' are placed in the summary, where, by the way, PROF. CURME shows a critical appreciation which one has hitherto missed.

To quarrel with the editor regarding his views would be unjust. Indeed, I fail to see how he differs so very much from the wicked critics of whom he complains, save that he generally suppresses or excuses (defiantly, to be sure) the weak side of his hero. But since his object is to impart equal fervor to the youth whom he addresses, I will call attention to several points which, I think, may hinder his success. In the first place, the editor's

style is to be regretted. The American youth of the present day is Voltairean, somewhat cynical. It conceals under a carefully guarded coating of what it delights to call "practical views of life," a stronger ingredient of idealism than has perhaps entered into the composition of any previous generation. Its eyes with the greatest suspicion any attempt to break through this covering from the outside. PROF. CURME advances to the assault in a spirit which would not have been out of place in the times of J.-J. ROUSSEAU. His moralizings and rhapsodies are unlimited. It is to be feared that they may prove fatal to his cause. Such phrases as the following would meet with varying comments among the exacting minds of the class-room: "How, in our youth time, like the young eaglets, we vainly beat the air . ." (p. xii); "This affliction was the rod of Moses that rent the rock (p. xiii); "The infinite is a great ocean upon whose shores we live and work . ." (p. xv); though "His elastic and sympathetic feelings formed a spring-board that hurled him into space" (p. xvi), may be considered as a sop thrown to certain heads of the college Cerberus.

Again, declamation and exhortation do not—and least of all at the present time—take the place of a rational development of the subject in hand. The point aimed at by the editor was to give the student a conception of LAMARTINE's personality. His method succeeds only in giving (sometimes to an unfortunate degree, cf. p. xxvii) the editor's own personality. Of LAMARTINE's nature and growth, a discussion of which might have logically proceeded from the judicious reflection: "Men, as unconsciously as trees, draw from the common soil of life what suits their natures" (p. x), we have nothing,—of his place in literature but little. The same disregard of objective information is found in the separate introductions to the poems forming the collection. It would, for instance, interest the student to know that *L'Isolement* was printed tentatively in 1819; that the substance of *Le Lac*—the date of which here differs by a year from that given in the Biographical Sketch (cf. p. xii)—resembles very strongly Letter 17, Part iv, of 'La Nouvelle Héloïse'; that *Les Préludes*, dedicated to HUGO, are in imitation of the latter's style, etc., etc.

Among the acknowledgments made to associates in the work of editing, PROF. CURME mentions especially the assistance rendered by PROF A. WILLIAMS of Brown University, who has prepared for this edition a short treatise on Versification, which is to be found in the volume directly after the text of the poems (pp. 139-146).

In this treatise PROF. WILLIAMS limits himself to the poetry previous to LAMARTINE, the rules of which, as is well known, the poet followed. His other limit is evidently MALHERBE. The first difficulty that confronts us in reviewing this sketch is our ignorance in regard to the editor's authorities. The terminology employed by him is not found in any studies on French versification which I have at hand, and may prove misleading. A "foot" which "is always composed of two syllables," a "verse or line" which "is named from the number of feet it contains: six feet, hexameter" etc. (p. 139), has, so far as I know, no foundation in French Prosody, whether in fact or in name. And the sudden change of nomenclature which follows in "verses of ten, eight, and seven syllables are very common" (p. 139) seems to contradict the previous definition. Under the caption of "Syllables" (p. 140), the rules for mute *e* lack the simplicity of those given by TOBLER, who also offers a plain etymological explanation for syllabication (p. 141). Similar defects can be shown in the section on Caesural Pause (p. 141), where verses of eleven and nine syllables are considered, though the former exist only as an artificial product, and the latter are generally assigned three accents: 3 × 3 × 3. The pages that follow are clearer, but the example for "perfect rime:" *compagnes campagnes* (p. 143), represents what is commonly known as "rich rime." There seems to be no need for a special notice of Licence in Arrangement (p. 144) and of Poetic Words and Expressions (p. 145). In this connection I would take the liberty of indicating to instructors who read with their classes any selections of French poetry, the efforts of M. PAUL PASSY to bring out the rhythm in what, to Anglo-Saxon ears, is apt to seem little else than harmonious prose.

F. M. WARREN.

Johns Hopkins University.